

Approved July 2, 2013

WENHAM BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Retreat Meeting of Friday, June 14, 2013
Town Hall, 138 Main Street

Pursuant to the Open Meeting Law, M.G.L. Chapter 30A, §§ 18-25, written notice posted by the Town Clerk and delivered to all Board members, a meeting of the Board of Selectmen was held on Friday, June 14 2013 at 1 pm in the Selectmen's Meeting Room.

With a quorum present, Mr. Whittaker called the Board of Selectmen meeting to order at 1 pm.

Selectmen Present: Ken Whittaker, Chair; Patrick Wilson, Vice Chair; Jack Wilhelm, Secretary

Also Present: Mark Andrews, Town Administrator; Michael Lucy, Chair Finance Committee

Catherine Tinsley, Minutes Secretary

Abbreviations used:

BOS Board of Selectmen

FY Fiscal Year

TA Town Administrator

Public Information

Retreat Agenda - Chairman Whittaker took the agenda out of order.

The Selectmen met and discussed a variety of town related subjects, concerns, and updates. There were no action items on the agenda and the Board took no official votes during this meeting, other than to adjourn.

Paul Weaver, Government Study Committee (GSC), Town Moderator, and Town Counsel, was present to update the BOS. He first reported that the Salem, Beverly Water Board (SBWB) prepared a draft document to allow the Town of Wenham to extend, construct, and maintain a sidewalk over the SBWB property along Cedar Street. All costs associated with the walk are to be covered by the Town. The Document continues to be reviewed but appears to in line with the Town's request. This will be on the next meeting agenda.

Government Study Committee (GSC) - Mr. Weaver addressed the BOS regarding the status of the GSC saying they are uncertain how to proceed having completed the report of the operational core of efficient operations in town hall. Because Wenham is a "pre-charter" town, changes to the governmental structure, requires a Special Act be approved by Town Meeting. Currently, the Board of Selectmen is the default executive decision maker for the town. The GSC worked with Kopelman & Paige on draft documents to:

1. 1.1 Make no changes to the structure. Compile in one place the obvious existing powers of the executive responsibility of the BOS; Codify independently elected boards and the BOS and follow rules of common application that are applied consistently within the town.
2. 2.2 Establish a Charter and clarify a strong Town Administrator

These can be considered separately at town meeting.

Chairman Whittaker supported the charge to the committee to put together documents for a strong Town Executive position in preparation for a Fall Town Meeting to be presented in two parts 1.1 (codifying existing authority of the BOS) and 2.2 to establish a referendum of the Town Administrator's position as independently empowered.

A vote to change the structure of Town Government would send the Special Act to the Legislature, which if approved, would be presented to the Town for a final ballot referendum.

Mr. Weaver estimated the committee would have their final recommendation submitted to the BOS by the first week in August 2013. Public hearings will be scheduled. The intention is to present this at the Fall Town Meeting.

Finance Department Restructuring Update - David Genereux, Interim Finance Director was present to give the BOS an update on the Finance Department. He reported:

1. Cash reconciliations will be completed by June 30, 2013.
2. One support staff position was increased to full time at 37.5 hours a week; this employee is not taking benefits
3. The 14 hour a week part time support staff position was filled

4. The Treasurer / Collector works 18 hours a week
5. Baystate Municipal Accounting Group, Justin Cole is the interim Town Accountant
6. The office is open and staffed during Town Hall business hours.
7. BMAG is contracted through June 30, 2013.

The Town is receiving resumes for the Town Accountant position.

Mr. Wilson lead a discussion about future staffing for the Finance Department saying with the position vacant, this is a good time to try contracted services as a cost savings to the town, citing the comparison to a benefited, fulltime, position. He stressed the importance to meet the needs of the taxpayers at the most reasonable cost, and encouraged the BOS to consider alternate models to hiring a full time benefited town employee, adding an employee can be hired at anytime. The Selectmen reviewed and discussed staffing models for the Finance Department. It was noted that the part-time 14-hour, support position could be increased to 19 hours, if necessary.

Mr. Genereux, responding to the concerns and questions of the Board.

Mr. Andrews was directed to set up interviews for the accounting position next week; Mr. Wilhelm will assist with the interviews.

Mr. Andrews will continue working with Mr. Genereux on a "hybrid" position for the Finance Department.

Penguin Hall, Boulder Lane Special Envoy for Economic Development - Mr. Andrews said the Town has to reach out to land owners, and developers to work with the town and suggested that Molly Martins be the liaison to the Town, citing her expertise and experience. Mr. Wilhelm disagreed with the appointment. The Board agreed to wait on this appointment until there is a clear understanding of what the liaison would do.

Present: Emily Cademartori, Conservation Commissioner, was present to update the BOS regarding town owned parcel located on Bolder Lane, which combined with the abutting properties acting as a single entity, may have development potential. She reported that the property owners pursued technical assistance from Mass Development to determine development possibilities. A Memorandum of Agreement between the property owners and Mass Development is being drafted regarding the grant money awarded to pay for the initial engineering costs; if the property is successfully developed, the grant is paid back through the project financing.

Penguin Hall – Work continues to go forward for the Penguin Hall senior community development. Engineering drawings are being reviewed as part of the financing phase. The affordable housing aspect of the project remains uncertain at this time. The Developer agreed to provide ten percent of the total development for affordable housing on site or fifteen percent off site. If the affordable units are built off site, the property must be secured before the permits are sought. As development in town unfolds, i.e. the Bolder Lane, Penguin Hall, this will be revisited in the future.

Demolition Delay Law for the Town - The Chair of the Historic District Commission has suggested a bylaw for historic properties in Town, which imposes a delay in the case of a demolition, to allow the Commission time to address the situation. Although the Board had some concerns, they agreed to get feedback from residents. The first step would be to seek input from the Historic District Commission.

Council on Aging—Director/Coordinator

Mr. Wilhelm recommended the Director position be staffed at 24 to 26 hours a week, within the approved FY14 budget. A screening committee is being formed to review the resumes; twenty-five resumes have been received to date.

The contract for the shared van service with Hamilton ends in November. The Town will have transportation service in place through this time. Mr. Whittaker suggested all options, including volunteerism, be considered to stay within the budget.

STM (October) – The BOS asked that the Special Town Meeting be held the second/ third week of October.

Regional Emergency Communications Center (RECC)

The ECO line item in the budget was reduced from \$135,000 to \$79,000 for FY 14 with joining the new regional center in Middleton. The close out process for the ECO with Hamilton is on going, with various considerations being taken into account.

Wenham is scheduled to switch over on June 26m 2013. Middleton is currently in the second phase of programming the microwave communications network, which will be tested next week. Informational letters were sent to residents.

TA Search Committee – Local towns that recently went through a Town Executive search are being contacted, a well as the Collins Institute, for comments as to a successful search process. Mr. Andrews noted that Topsfield, & Manchester recently went through such a search. Mr. Wilhelm reminded the board that each Selectman agreed to contact these towns for first hand information.

FY 2015 Budget Process - A preliminary meeting schedule for FY 14 has been released by the Finance Committee Chair.

The BOS confirmed they want an active roll in the budget process for the upcoming year, and asked that joint meetings be included in the schedule, as well as joint meetings with Hamilton.

The Selectmen talked about the different ways to approach the budget, e.g. capping line items, targeting a specific tax rate, and to be aware during the process of the affect on the tax base and taxpayers. They asked that the process and time line be decided before going into the budget season. The Town Administrator will talk with Department Heads during pre-budget season to get an understanding of the department needs.

The Selectmen requested the HWRSD also define their budget goals.

It was noted this is a contract year for the teachers union and the towns can have a representative at the table. Hamilton and Wenham alternate sending a representative and it is Hamilton's turn for this contract.

The draft Financial Policy & Procedures is on the Finance Committee June 26th meeting agenda for approval. This is done in time for the pre-audit, which will begin the first week in July 2013.

The Best Practices document is an 80 to 100-page document that is still in the development stage and is independent of the Financial Policy & Procedures document.

Mr. Andrews reported he continues to standardize job descriptions and salaries for all full and part time positions in town and work to update the Town Employee Handbook.

Regarding the Shared Services Agreements (Library, buildings and grounds agreements), a Comprehensive review of Inter-municipal Agreements is being performed. The Buildings and Grounds Maintenance agreements have been working well over the past few years. Long term Capital Planning will be done this year.

Mr. Genereux provided a draft of the proposed universal administrative fee model that was recalculated from 10 percent to 5.8 %. This reduces the fees Wenham receives by approximately \$25,000. The intention is to apply this formula across the board for all Shared Service Agreements. Regarding old contracts, Town Counsel confirmed all contracts must be honored. Mr. Andrews will work to resolve these issues with Hamilton Town Manager. Mr. Andrews was authorized to send a letter to Hamilton regarding contract issues.

Long-term Financial Planning – The five-year capital plan will be updated for FY14.

Iron Rail Property - This is a significant source of income to the Town. All leases are paid to date. There is one space available for lease.

Town Hall and Police Station Building Committee - The Committee is in the final stage of implementing a landscaping plan. The Committee Roster will be updated to include the new TA and Police Chief. The BOS asked that the Committee consider paying for the shed needed by the Police Department.

The BOS agreed that having a selectmen liaison for Town departments, boards, and committees is helpful. The liaison list will be reviewed at an upcoming meeting.

The Land Study Committee was set up to study the potential best use of town owned land (Iron Rail, Dearborn, Bolder Lane). Unless there is a new charge for this Committee, it will be dissolved.

Mr. Wilson stressed the importance of completing the Open Space Plan. Mr. Whittaker will confer with Emily Cademartori.

Vote: Mr. Wilhelm moved to adjourn at 4:49 pm and it was unanimous to do so.

Respectfully submitted by

Catherine Tinsley
6.20.2013